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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1139
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RUEHGH/AMCONSUL SHANGHAI 0395
RUEHSH/AMCONSUL SHENYANG 0405
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASH DC
RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC
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SENSITIVE
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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [CH](#)

SUBJECT: South China Violent Land Disputes Symptomatic of the
Country's Larger Governance Problems

REF: A) SHANGHAI 10, B) 09 GUANGZHOU 689, C) 09 BEIJING 3399, D) 09
CHENGDU 230, E) 09 GUANGZHOU 466

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11. (SBU) Summary: Violence erupted in a long festering land dispute in rural Longya Village of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region early on January 12, 2010, resulting in a number of arrests and hospitalizations for local villagers and public security officers. Congenoff visited the site on February 5 and saw no signs of the violence. But government notices were posted on village buildings describing "the crime" and naming suspects who were instructed to turn themselves in and "confess their criminal deeds" so they could be "educated in accordance with law." End summary.

12. (SBU) Comment: Land-related protests, which often turn violent, are widespread in south China, frequently stemming from local officials colluding with property developers to pay little or no compensation to displaced residents. The problem is often exacerbated by unrealistic expectations among local citizens about the compensation they can receive if they refuse initial offers and hold out for more. These tensions, coupled with little effective government oversight or media scrutiny of local officials, as well as a lack of legal remedies or other dispute resolution mechanisms for displaceTQQT
Uyor local officials and China's legal institutions can both be strengthened, these types of protests are likely to continue, and possibly even increase, fueled by rising land prices that lead both developers and local residents to see China's limited usable land as their ticket to prosperity. End comment.

Accept the Deal, Get Off the Land

13. (U) Violence erupted in the tiny rural village of Longya before dawn on January 12, 2010. The story was reported in the Guangzhou-based newspaper Southern Metropolis Daily and by Stratfor Global Intelligence, an Austin, Texas-based provider of foreign affairs research and analysis in the company's China Security Memo.

Both articles described how public security personnel entered the village at 5:00 am on January 12 to arrest several residents who had prevented local authorities from taking possession of disputed land in mid-December.

¶4. (U) Violence ensued when neighbors and friends reportedly surrounded public security officers and refused to let them arrest the 12 villagers sought by local authorities. Stratfor reported that the 12 individuals had been called to testify in a court hearing to dispute local government claims to the land. The report contended that by arresting the villagers before they could appear in court, local officials and property developers would be granted final clearance to seize the land.

Please, Don't Shoot!

¶5. (U) All reports of the violence, including local government notices posted in the village, described how local residents used sickles, hoes and fire bombs to attack police and set a police car ablaze. Outside reports also noted that police fired on a number of villagers, including one 37-year-old man who was hospitalized with 5 shots to his leg and toes and another who was shot twice in the chest and once in the leg, although government notices conspicuously omitted any mention of police gun use.

¶6. (U) Following the pre-dawn clash, police retreated for several hours before returning at noon with approximately 100 officers, including two heavily armed officers who reportedly traveled 100 kilometers from Guilin city with machine guns, according to the press reports. The mid-day police action concluded with numerous

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additional arrests and removal of the burned out police car. A journalist from Southern Metropolis Daily who visited the area a few days later was initially denied access and information, before reportedly being beaten by local thugs for investigating the story, which was eventually published one week after the incident.

Tense Silence in Longya Village

¶7. (SBU) When Congenoff visited the village February 5, there was no trace of the violence that took place 3 weeks earlier except for a few official notices posted on buildings about perpetrators. There was also evidence that there might have previously been many more notices pasted to walls throughout the village, but now only a few of the original notices remained, and a new notice had been posted February 4 listing the names of wanted suspects. When asked for information, on one in the village was rude, but residents declined to discuss the incident with Congenoff. For a picture and English translations of the two notices please visit Guangzhou's South China SEZ blog at <http://www.intelink.gov/communities/state/southchinasez/>.

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